

Claims 51-100

Claims 51-52, 54-56, 59-77, 79-81, and 84-100 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Shoff. Claims 53 and 78 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Shoff in view of Davis. Claims 57-58 and 82-83 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Shoff in view of Matthews. These rejections are respectfully traversed.

Applicants' systems and methods of claims 51-100 are directed to improving the way that an interactive television program guide retrieves data. In two typically proposed architectures for program guide systems, program guide data is either periodically downloaded and stored locally within a set-top box (i.e., in a stand-alone guide) or is available from a server in a client-server architecture (i.e., in a client-server guide). In stand-alone guides, storing the program guide data locally may reduce the time between when a viewer requests the data and when the data is actually displayed, but such an approach may require significant memory in the set-top box and can be expensive to implement. In client-server guides, retrieving program guide data from a server can introduce significant delay between when a viewer requests the data and when the data is actually displayed. Such an approach can also place a heavy burden on the network, particularly when multiple viewers request data from the server at the same time. (See applicants' specification, p. 2, line 22 to p. 3, line 4).

Applicants' systems and methods of claims 51-100 are directed to an approach in which an interactive television program guide system has "local memory" and "remote memory." The local memory is configured "to store program guide data for use by the interactive television program guide." The remote memory is configured "to store supplemental data for

access by the interactive television program guide." When the user takes actions with the user television equipment that are indicative of a potential upcoming need for a given portion of the supplemental data, "the system automatically supplies the given portion of the supplemental data from the remote memory to the interactive television program guide in advance of the upcoming need based on the actions of the user" (independent claims 51 and 76, emphasis added).

Shoff does not disclose applicants' approach of claims 51-100 in which program guide data is stored locally and supplemental data is stored remotely for access by the interactive television program guide. First, Shoff's locally-running EPG receives data periodically and does not receive "supplemental data" from a remote memory "in advance of [an] upcoming need based on the actions of the user" as recited in independent claims 51 and 76. Instead, Shoff discloses a pure stand-alone guide. Data from an electronic program guide (EPG) server 44 at a headend 22 is "transmitted periodically in batch, or individually, and cached at the local EPG" running on a viewer computing unit 24 (Shoff, col. 7, lines 1-8, emphasis added).*

Second, Shoff's supplemental content 54 is not "supplemental data for access by the interactive television program guide" because Shoff's EPG never uses the supplemental content. Shoff makes clear that supplemental content 54 is retrieved and rendered by a web browser 106 and not by the EPG: "the supplemental content is constructed as a hypertext file which is rendered by a browser" (Shoff, col. 5, lines 23-25). Consequently, supplemental content 54 is never "automatically supplie[d]" to the EPG "in advance of [an]

* EPG server 44 is called a server but it clearly does not respond to Shoff's EPG as a server in a client-server-based approach would.

upcoming need based on the actions of the user" as recited in independent claims 51 and 76.

Accordingly, independent claims 51 and 76 are patentable over Shoff. Claims 52-75 depend from independent claim 51 and are also patentable. Claims 77-100 depend from independent claim 76 and are also patentable. Claims 51-100 are therefore patentable for at least the foregoing reasons.

New Claims 101-150

Claims 101-125 are directed to machine-readable media for providing features similar to those of claims 51-75 and 76-100. Accordingly, claims 101-125 are also patentable.

Supplemental Information Disclosure Statement

Applicants have not yet received an initialed Form PTO-1449 for the Supplemental Information Disclosure Statement mailed on December 15, 1999. Applicants respectfully request that a copy of Form PTO-1449, as considered and initialed by the Examiner, be returned with the next communication.

Conclusion

Applicants submit that this application, including claims 51-125, is now in condition for allowance. Accordingly, prompt consideration and allowance of this application are respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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